



# Town of Brookline

## Massachusetts

### Department of Public Works

#### Engineering & Transportation Division

TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
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March 18 2019

Jesse Geller, Chair  
Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals  
333 Washington Street  
Brookline, MA 02445

Re: 1299 Beacon Street

Dear Chairman Geller,

Per Chapter 317 of the Acts of 1974 the Transportation Board for the Town of Brookline is the local governing body which has authority to enact rules and regulations regarding the movement of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians on the public way. However, as you are aware, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B Sections 20 – 23 and 760 CMR 56.02 supersedes our enabling legislation for not only permitting but also for creating and altering the Traffic Rules and Regulations for the Town's public ways. Therefore we are writing this letter to provide comments and recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals relative to the proposed 1299 Beacon Street Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Application.

At the March 18, 2019 meeting of the Transportation Board we reviewed the plans for the proposed 40B development at 1299 Beacon Street with representatives from the proponent including Rachna Balakrishna, Stefan Vogelmann of CBT Architects, and Giles Ham of Vanasse & Associates. It is the Board's understanding that the project will entail the removal of the existing retail store and construct in its place a new Mixed-Use Development with:

- 74 residential rental units with pedestrian access from Sewall Avenue and from Beacon Street,
- 87 parking spaces in a 3 level underground garage accessed via Sewall Avenue,
- First floor restaurant/retail space with access from Beacon Street,
- Tenants will be age restricted to 55+,
- A proposed 40 foot curbside 15 minute short term parking zone on Beacon Street for resident/restaurant patron drop off and pick up purposes,
- An on-site passenger loading zone via the u-shape driveway accessed via Sewall Avenue, and
- An on-site loading zone accessed via Sewall Avenue for deliveries as well as trash and recycle pick up

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The hearing including a discussion with the developer, their consultants, staff, and neighborhood residents on the design elements of the building, the proposed passenger and commercial loading zones, the existing traffic congestion and the fact that this is a designated high crash cluster area for pedestrians and cyclists by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration and how this project will impact these conditions, and the existing public parking utilization and how this project will impact these conditions.

In response to this discussion and our review of the plans in general we offer the following comments and recommendations on this project which were unanimously adopted by the Transportation Board:

1. In general, based on the Transportation Board's experience and knowledge of the existing parking utilization and congestion on Sewall Avenue stemming from the US Postal Service and Temple Sinai, the negative impacts from the revised 2025 Build condition trip generations in an already congested area, and the negative impacts to the existing on-street public parking supply with the loss of 4 of 5 spaces on Sewall Avenue, the Transportation Board believes that the scale of this project is not appropriate for this location.
2. Given the 55+ age restriction for the residential units, the Transportation Board encourages the project to provide parking sufficient to ensure an on-site parking space is available for residential purposes including resident, visitor, or care giver vehicles to minimize the need for additional impacts to the limited on-street public parking supply.
3. To support and achieve the trip reductions taken for transit and alternative modes of transportation in the project's updated Transportation Impact Assessment and the further minimize the impact on the already congested roadway network, the Transportation Board encourages the Zoning Board of Appeals to require the unbundling of the parking spaces from the residential leases rather than automatically include the space with the rental price of a residential unit. This is an increasingly common best-practice in parking-constrained neighborhoods like Coolidge Corner.
4. Because of the high demand for 2 hour metered curbside parking by customers to the existing commercial and retail businesses on Beacon Street, the difficulty and impracticality of enforcing short term parking requiring an enforcement to visit the site every 15 minutes, the existing on-site drop off/pick up location on the driveway via Sewall Avenue, and the fact that only one other restaurant in Coolidge Corner has a curbside area dedicated for passenger loading the Transportation Board does not support the pre-mature removal of the metered parking spaces on Beacon Street for an assumed demand. There would be nothing preventing the building or restaurant management from petitioning the Transportation Board for the creation of this zone at a later date, after the project is completed, and the need is demonstrated.
5. Should the Zoning Board of Appeals decide to remove the two metered parking spaces on Beacon Street the Transportation Board recommends that:
  - a. The area be posted PASSENGER LOADING ZONE and NO STOPPING ANYTIME/TOW AWAY ZONE
  - b. All signs and poles initially installed be paid for by the developer and meet Town of Brookline specifications

- c. The use of the loading zone is available to any vehicle authorized by the Traffic Rules and Regulations for the Town of Brookline and not the exclusive use of the tenants of 1299 Beacon Street
  - d. The developer reimburses the Town for the estimated loss in parking meter revenue for a 2 year period. Sum to be provided by the Transportation Division of the Department of Public Works
  - e. Any changes in design must be approved by the Director of the Engineering & Transportation Division of the Department of Public Works
6. The driveway entrances should not be depressed, but should be at the elevation of the sidewalk to minimize impacts to pedestrians.
  7. The proposed widths of the curb cuts and radii of the curb returns for the driveways should be minimized to retain as much on-street parking as possible on Sewall Avenue.
  8. Transit screens (similar to <https://transitscreen.com/>) displaying real time information for MBTA buses, Greenline Trolleys, and other alternative modes of transportation should be installed in the onsite residential lobby for use by residents, visitors, and staff and retail employees.
  9. Sufficient on-site covered bicycle racks should be provided for use by residents, visitors, staff, and restaurant/retail employees. The Transportation Board recommends that the developer be required to utilize the City of Cambridge Bicycle Parking Guide as a best practice for siting, dimensions, rack styles, etc. but not necessarily for the minimum ratios of required bicycle racks.
  10. Mitigation package should include the cost to construct the staff developed intersection improvements to the intersection of Longwood Avenue @ Sewall Avenue as provided by the Transportation Division of the Department of Public Works.
  11. Mitigation package should include the cost to construct a curb extension/wide sidewalk between Longwood Avenue and the first driveway curb cut for the purpose of locating a year-round BlueBikes station with a funding commitment by the developer for the costs to purchase and operation the station for 2 years as provided by the Planning Department.
  12. A comprehensive Parking & Transportation Demand Management (P&TDM) program that complies with the Town's Transportation Access Guidelines for employees of the residential building and any tenant that occupies the restaurant/retail space.
  13. A Transportation Access Plan Agreement including traffic monitoring that complies with the Town's Transportation Access Guidelines.
  14. Installation of EV Chargers and EV Ready spaces be included in the garage in compliance with the Town's Transportation Access Guidelines.
  15. Reserve the right to comment further in the process when this information is made available for review by the public.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed 1299 Beacon Street Chapter 40B

Comprehensive Permit Application. Because the proposal may change throughout this process the Transportation Board does reserve the right to provide comments further in the process when this information is made available for review by the public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher A. Dempsey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Chris Dempsey, Chair  
Brookline Transportation Board

Cc: Alison Steinfeld, Director – Planning & Community Development  
Peter M. Ditto, Director – Engineering & Transportation Division  
Daniel Bennett, Building Commissioner